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Foreign Policy Changes Proposed by Fulbright

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Senator Urges Abandonment Of 'Old Myths'

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J. William Fulbright, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, yesterday called on the Johnson Administration and the Nation to abandon "old myths" in favor of "the new realities of our time."

In a 70-minute speech delivered in hardly more than a whisper to an almost empty Senate chamber, Fulbright came down especially hard on American policy toward Cuba, almost as hard about Panama and in an almost puzzled mood about Viet-Nam?

McNamara stings House GOP with criticism of $1 billion limit on military aid. Page A2.

His remarks on specific problem areas were cast against a basic belief that "the character of the Cold War has, for the present at least, been profoundly altered" with a resultant "unsettling effect on both public and official opinion in the United States."

On Cuba, the Senator called for "a candid re-evaluation" of American policy "even though it may lead to distasteful conclusions." Ruling out military invasion and terming the current economic blockade policy a failure, Fulbright said the United States can only accept "the continued existense of the Castro regime as a distasteful nuisance but not an intolerable danger so long as the nations of this Hemisphere are prepared to meet their etao shrd etaoi shrdl etaoshtt

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obligations of collective defense under the Rio Treaty."

The United States, he added, has flattered Fidel Castro, "a noisy but minor demagogue," by "treating him as if he were a Napoleonic menace." But he characterized as a myth the idea that Cuban communism is a transitory menace.

While the Castro regime is not on the verge of collapse and while its continued existence is inimical to American interests and policies, Fulbright said, it is "not an insuperable obstacle to the attainment of our objectives unless we make it so by permitting it to poison our politics at home and to divert us from more important tasks in the Hemisphere."

The United States, he said, is "bound to conclude that Castro is a nuisance but not a grave threat to the United States and that he cannot be gotten rid of except by means that are wholly disproportionate to the objective. Cuban communism does pose a grave threat to other Latin American countries, but this threat can be dealt with by prompt and vigorous use of the established procedures of the inter-American system against any act of aggression."

Smathers Dissents

Fulbright's remarks on Cuba brought a statement of dissent from Sen. George Smathers (D-Fla.).

Smathers termed Fulbright "monumentally naive and unrealistic" in calling the Castro regime only a distasteful nuisance. He condemned his Democratic colleague's remarks on Cuba by saying no other policy statement "could please the Communists more."

On Panama, Fulbright said the United States would "do well to disabuse ourselves of the myth that there is something morally sacred about the treaty of 1903," which the Panamanian government wants revised. He said he

wanted to suggest that "there is little basis for a posture of injured innocence and self-righteousness by either side," that the treaty is "in certain respects obsolete" and that the basic problem about it is the feeling of Panamanians that they are treated as a colony or quasi-colony.

Suggests U.S. Initiative

Without mentioning President Johnson by name, Fulbright said the United States should "take the initiative in proposing new arrangements that would redress some of Panama's grievances" over the treaty.

The Senator said it was "silly" to say that the issue with Panama "is a test of our courage and resolve." And he added that neither "weakness" nor "dishonor" were involved in ending the "semantic debate" on whether the United States would agree in advance to "negotiate" or only to "discuss" the treaty, the stumbling block now for many weeks. Rather, he added, the United States should state "positively and clearly that it is prepared to negotiate revisions" and to submit such changes as are made to the Senate for its advise and consent.

Then, the Senator added: "I think it is necessary for the United States to do this even though a commitment to revise the treaty may be widely criticized at home. It is the responsibility of the President and his advisers, in situations of this sort, to exercise their own best judgment as to where the national interest lies even though this may necessitate unpopular decisions."

Administration Reaction

The Senator's remarks on Cuba and Panama brought from White House sources htis comment last night:

"It is a very interesting speech with many items worthy of consideration. But specifically on Cuba and Panama it does not represent the policy of the Administration."

It was added that the Senator had not discussed his speech in advance with any member of the Administration.

Fulbright acknowledged later that he had no prior consultation with any Administration official. He said the main reason he made the speech was because such Republicans as Sen. Barry Goldwater (Ariz.), Gov. Nelson Rockefeller of New York and Sen. Kenneth Keating (N.Y.) kept saying foreign policy would be the main issue of the campaign.

"If that's the way they feel about it," he commented, "then why don't we talk about it?"

Latin-American Problem

On Latin America in general, Fulbright suggested that the United States ought to be thinking about its reaction to what he considers a possibility: social revolutions with violent upheavals, especially "where feudal oligarchies resist all meaningful change by peaceful means."

The United States, he added, ought to consider its attitude if such upheavals should produce revolutions similar to that of long ago in Mexico or the more recent one in Egypt.

Another set of myths, said Fulbright, relate to the Far East, especially to China and Viet-Nam. "We have been unwilling" to think of new policies, he said, "because of the fear of many Government officials, undoubtedly well founded, that even the suggestion of new policies toward" those two nations "would provoke a vehement public outcry."

While he opposed recognition of Red China or its admission to the United Nations, "under present circumstances," the Senator called for "the capacity to be flexible" in relations with that nation.

"We must jar open our minds to certain realities," he went on, including the fact that China is "ruled by Communists and likely to remain so for the indefinite future."

On Viet-Nam Fulbright said there are only "two realistic options" for the United States: Expand the conflict "in one way or another or a renewed effort to bolster the capacity of the South Vietnamese to prosecute the war successfully on the present scale."